THE WAY OF THE SWAN

Poems of Kashmir

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To

VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT

MANSURU'L HALLAJ
The Secret Difficult To Tell 72

UTPALACHARYA
Communion Hymn 73

KĀMA KALĀ VILĀSA TANTRA
The Word, The Goddess of Kashmir 75

KALHANA PANDIT
The Land of Nila 79

NILAMATA PURANAM 80
Lord of the Sapphire Radiance! 81

HABBA KHATUN
Lol of the Lonely Pine 87
Song of the Restless Stream 88
Gather Violets, O Narcissus! 89
Never Return These Hours 90
The Golden Wine Cups of the Night 91
Lol of the Wild Yellow Rose 92
Habba Khatun 93

KASHMIRI FOLK SONGS
Song of the Jhelum 97
Song of the Chenar Leaf 98
Saffron Flower 99
The Tale of the Reed Flute 100
O, Men and Birds! 102
Ballad of the Honey Bee 103

LADAKHI FOLK SONGS
Song Accompanying the Dance of the Opening Bud 107
Song of the Flute 108

LOLS OF ARNIMAL
Song of the Blossoming Orchard 111
Almond Blossom Song 112
O, Dawn! 114
Spinning Song 115
O, Rose! 116
Take Back the Wine and Candle-light 118
But Flower, Jasmine Mine! 119

THE KRISHNA LILA OF KASHMIR

PARAMANANDA
The Secret Word 123
The Moth the Lesson Never Learns 124
Where Love Becomes An Ocean 125
Radha Svayamvara 126

KRISHNA RAZDAN
But Why Renounce the World? 137

THE HOLY GITA, LIFE

ZINDA KAUL
That Moth, Mansur 141
Hymn to Love 143
The Holy Song of Life 144
My Lover from Eternity Awaits 146
The New Snow 148

The Ka'ba and The Light of Somanath

O, Sarfi, as on every side a ray
Has fallen from His face to light the night,
Impossible it is for you to say
That Somanath has not the Ka'ba's light!

YAQUB SARFI KASHMIRI

Persian Diwan
Opening Ode

Kashmira Mandala

The Birth of the World from the Waters

The story of how Kashmir came to be renowned as the "land foremost in the world for ecstasy and Yoga" is told in the poems, scriptures, romances, memoirs and histories written by Kashmiris during the past sixteen hundred years. From these writings, there emerges an unbroken history of thought, along with a picture of life in vivid detail. According to Kashmir's commentary upon South India's *Natya Shastra*,[1] the universe is a Dance of creative desire and rapture in which experiences of consciousness, and not dogmas or doctrines are the liturgic reality, and life an aesthetic experience in all its moments. We read of delightful light wine cooled with ice and perfumed with flowers, exquisite theatrical performances, twelve storey palaces topped with crystal rooms and golden domes, theatres lighted with garlands of golden lotuses, banquets at which the Sultans of Kashmir served curry, cream and wine in tanks to ascetics from the plains of India and all the songs of Kashmira and the Kashya countries[2] were sung.

Kashmiris claim, in their histories, to have marched upon South India and the islands of the ocean in order to prohibit the slaughter of animals, in their scriptures, to have mastered the energy of the atom as an experience of consciousness.

[1] Bharata's *Natya Sutra* was commentated in the 11th century by Abhinava Gupta from the standpoint of the Kashmir Shaiva concept of the world as energy and the Dance as the ritual drama of its cyclic rebirth from the waters.

[2] Shrivara Pandit's *Jainatarangini* preserves the ancient use of the term *Kashya* for the regions of the lost northern sea, remembered in the *Zend Avesta* as Vourukasha.

Kings of Kashmira, J. C. Dutt, Calcutta, 1898, Vol. III.

They claim to have proved that women are four times more intelligent than men and ten times more receptive to the mysteries of the Bodhi-radiance which form the spiritual religion. What they say of themselves, legendary or historical, is their vision of the world and the human being, expressed not only in philosophical systems and scientific theories of music, poetics and the unconscious and transconscious minds, but also in a form of popular devotion and folk wisdom which makes their villages centres of humanistic achievement. Five hundred years ago, the patron saint of Kashmir organised a Muslim "Order of Rishis" to supervise social development on the principle that peace between neighbours and peoples begins with peace within individuals. Combining the delights of solitude with manual labour for the community, the disciples of Nuru'd-din, Nund Rishi, the Pir-e-Rishiyan,[3] found novel ways of impressing a vision of beauty as harmony upon the everyday pattern of folk life. The success of Kashmir with group as well as individual ecstasy is a unique chapter in the history of humanism.

Kashmiris themselves are hardly aware of their achievement. Institutions and festivals which strike the outsider as original and practical solutions of social questions they take for granted. While pilgrims walk over deserts and mountains to *Kashmira Mandala*,[4] they, in their own pilgrimages within Kashmir, have arranged things to enable "milk" relatives to enjoy boat outings together. There is a Hindu shrine by the tomb of a Muslim saint, or a mosque will have a shrine in the courtyard, so that a Muslim "milk father" can chaperon a boatload of laughing Brahman "milk" daughters to the joint sanctuary of Shah Hamadan and Shri Kali, or "milk" brothers and sisters pay their respects together to Sheikh Hamza Makhdum and Sharika Bhagavati when the almond blossoms

[3] Preceptor, "Elder" of Rishis, a Persian-Sanskrit compound, typical of the 14th-15th century spiritual movement in Kashmir.

[4] The Circle of Kashmir.

Mandala: liturgically, circle; geographically, zone, land.

and iris flowers bloom on the fortress of the "thirty million shining ones" over the capital. Singing in the face of disaster, hospitable, generous and beautiful, the Kashmiris in their mountain paradise solve, by their peculiar blend of laughter and reverence, what bigotry elsewhere complicates.

The pilgrims walking to Kashmir, participating in the ancient drama of uniting India in the places of pilgrimage, have a goal of their own in this image of sacred geography. The meaning of *Kashmira Mandala* to the story of Indian spirituality begins in what the seats of the four Jagat Gurus mean to the stream of pilgrims. The World Gurus of the east, west, north and south support the symbolic pillars of the directions, enclosing the *mandala* of visionary geography which is at once the unity of India and the liturgical ideogram of a concept recurring in all branches of the Aryan heritage. To close the circle with the bounding pillars is to have become the lord of the circle, to have drawn the *mandala* of integration of the vital and ideal. The *Chandogya Upanishad* outlines a meditation upon the universe of sound and perfumes radiating in four endless directions from an abode of songs and waters at the centre. The concept is subjected by Kashmir Shaivism to rational analysis in its philosophical renaissance of the eighth to the fourteenth century, a movement which accepted nothing from ancient tradition or liturgical symbolism which did not bear confirmation. The spiritual event prefigured by the image of *Kashmira Mandala* as the aura of eternity shining over the pilgrimage to the four directions came, in the Shaiva literature, to be analysed in a manner which draws a number of Indo-Iranian symbols to a coherent pattern. In the Puranic era, the image of itself as halo and sanctuary of eternity, guardian of the directions and birthplace of the world from the waters, is the theme of Kashmir's own creation myth: the poem inaugurating its literary history.[5]

[5] *Nilamata Puranam*, Sanskrit text, ed. by Jagaddhar Zadoo and Ramlal Kanjilal, Lahore, 1924.

This personal *puranam* places inner and outer circles of the mountain ranges of Kashmir in a protectorate of the Serpent of Eternity. In his cosmic form, Shesha Naga played a leading part in draining the lake which had filled the valley. As the son of the Rishi Kashyapa, Nila Naga, the Muni, he negotiated the expedition of the gods in the first battle to save Kashmir. The light of his seven hundred haloes shines from the Himalaya to the ocean, surrounding India in a circle of blue which lasts though the earth go down beneath the waters in the Nights of Brahma.

Cyclic genesis from the waters is associated, in the memory of the Aryans, with a holy land of dawns and origins left behind them, an ark of seeds and archetypes in a *central circle*[6] which had been the home of hymns and scene of ecstasies and revelations. The second birth of Zarathustra,[7] his spiritual nativity, takes place in his return to Airyanem Vaeja (Pahlavi Iran-Vej,)[8] the central *karshvar*, where he crosses the four branches of the sacred river Daiti and is clothed, from its waters, in the radiance which enables him to see and speak with the holy immortals. The accomplishment of his aeon is to be in the person of three saviours born of the light of his glory. The quaternity is depicted by the visionary geography which assigns seven saviours to the four directions in a figuration of the fundamental concept of the seven immortals as six and one. Two *karshvars* are placed to the north of the central circle, two to the south, and one each to the east and west. The six are presided over by guardians who will cooperate with the seventh, the promised Saoshyant, whose coming will accomplish the transfiguration of the earth. The division of the earth into twice six zones, to concord with the

[6] The Avestic *karshvar* (Latin *orbis*), equivalent of the Sanskrit *mandala*, zone; Persian, *keshvar*, land.

[7] "When Zarathustra reached the age of thirty, there came upon him the desire for Iran-Vej, and he set out for it with a few companions, men and women." *Zarathust-Namah*, ed. by F. Rosenberg, St. Petersberg, 1914, pp. 22.

[8] Cradle, *seed* of the Aryans.

signs of the zodiac, announces the dyadic relationship of celestial doubles underlying creation as the union of heaven and earth.

The holy land of the Indo-Iranians, in which the ecstasies of Zarathustra, and of every soul at the dawn of its eternity take place, reappears in *Kashmira Mandala* in a reconstruction of its most ancient and sacred associations, the Spirit of God upon the Waters and the ark of seeds fastened to a mountain of the universe which is, at once, the universal ocean. The *central circle*, in which the seeds of restoration are guarded in the radiance of primeval waters by the Goddess Ardvi Sura Anahita, is transplanted to Kashmir complete with its three sacred peaks and battle for the immortals, the essences of all things on the earth transferred to the transfiguring radiance of the waters of the Vitasta, the Goddess in person. In the new "mandala containing all mandalas", the guardianship of the directions is conferred upon four Maha-Nagas, enthroned upon the holy mountains of the vale.[9]

In the eighth century, Shankaracharya, who completed his own pilgrimage in Kashmir, established the seats of the Jagat Gurus at the four corners of India. His grand concept of the drama of pilgrimage reflects the meaning which Kashmir gave to its mythic guardians of the directions. The Body of Vishnu, conceived as India, standing upon the lotus of the ocean, had long been invested with pilgrimages representing the lotus "circles" of the shining, *deva* body. The seventh circle, the golden lotus of a thousand petals to which Raja Yoga aspires, is represented on earth by the lake of the mind, the Manasarovara of Mount Kailasha, even as the seventh Saoshyant of the Iranians will be born of the golden radiance of the lake of salvation by knowledge. The sixth *chakra* upon

[9] The Dikpalas of Kashmir:
Guardian of the East, Bindusara Naga; of the South, Shrimadaka; of the North, Uttara Ganga (Gangabal Lake, Mount Haramukh); of the West, Ailapatra (Elapatur Lake, Mount Aparbat, above Gulmarg).
Nilamata Puranam, *op. cit.* Appendix, p. 4.

the Body of Vishnu is Hardwar, the point at which the Ganges emerges from the "brow of Shiva" and the Himalaya opens to the vision of the eternal snows. Hardwar is the *Nilamata Puranam's* point of departure for the rescue of *Kashmira Mandala* from the demoniac invasion, Benares of the road by which the gods must walk to Kashmir as the road to themselves.

As the realm of theophanies and regeneration from the waters, the situation of Airyanem Vaeja is determined in relation to each and every individual. Between the point that the sun rises on the longest day, wherever he may be, and where it rises on the shortest, is the eastern *karshvar*, Savahi, from which he situates the others.[10] So, too, the visions of Zarathustra take place outside of space and time. His first vision in Airyanem Vaeja takes place on the eve of the Nuruz, the New Year day of spring. The *Nilamata* calls this equinoxial New Year the "day God creates the world at sunrise". The festival it orders salutes the guardian Manus of humanities yet to come. It is in the present cycle, of the fourteenth Manu, that Kashyapa reclaims Kashmir from the waters.

In the Shaiva scriptures, four states support the twelve ranges of consciousness which, on the wheel of energies, create and dissolve the worlds. It is a movement not of Genesis, but of Paligenesis, birth again, which is birth from the waters.

The six *karshvars* of the Iranians, with Airyanem Vaeja the centre, are surrounded by Vourukasha, the ocean which is, at once, the lost sea of Central Asia and the realm of infinite lights and waters in which the three holy mountains of theophany stand. Vourukasha has engulfed the twelve mythic zones of earth so that human beings may no more pass from one to

[10] *Datistan-i-Dinik*, XXXVI 3-6, *Pahlavi Texts* II, pp. 78-9, quoted by Henry Corbin in *Terre Celeste et Corps de Resurrection*, Eranos-Jahrbuch XXII, Rhein-Verlag-Zurich, 1954, pp. 114-5.

Henry Corbin follows the exposition to resolve the argument on the original situation of Airyanem Vaeja by its meaning to spiritual, not geographical history: "The presence which constitutes the centre, and, as such, is origin, not result of spatial references, is not situated, but situative."

the other as in the beginning. Their restoration will be in the sacrament of the Haoma (Soma), extracted from the plant which grows on the heights of the mountains and in the depths of the sea. By the Pahlavi era, the Caspian Sea was regarded as a remnant of the lost sea, which had once reached beyond Kashmar, in Turkestan, still bearing its name.

Herodotus uses the earliest Greek compound from the root: *Kas-patyros*,[11] "of the Kasha father", or fatherland of the *Kashas* for the region between Gandhara (the east of modern Afghanistan) and Kashmir. The term embodies the Indo-European elements of the Sanskrit *Kashyapa*. *Kas-pi-a*, the Greek name of the sea, is, etymologically, "of the people of the Kasha father". Ptolemy's term *Kaspeirans* for a people spread from Bactria and Gandhara to Mathura, which he calls Mathura-of-the-Gods, combines the same elements.

The Rishi Kashyapa is, *par excellence*, *prajapati*, progenitor and protector of creatures. The name of the Himalayan land reclaimed by him from the waters commemorates the cosmic mountain, Kash-mir, and the waters of space, upon which the coils of the mythic Shesha support the sleeping Vishnu during the cyclic dissolution. The Indo-European languages conserve the association of cosmic mountain and ocean: Sanskrit, *Su-meru*, Greek *To-mar-os*, the birthplace of the Gods. The cypress of Kashmar, planted by Zarathustra's convert, Vistaspa, before the first fire temple, grew to legendary proportions with the expansion of the faith throughout the region which had been the prehistoric sea. It was its tree of life, from ancient roots, significantly preserving the sacred name.

The Greek sources, compared with the Chinese, confirm the usage whereby Ptolemy presents the *Kasperoi* as a mightily expanded people of many branches, with Kashmir itself preserving their name and sacred origins. Among the cities of their realm he lists the "City of Kaspeira". The Chinese speak of the learned and eloquent brethren of "the charming city of

[11] Greek possesses no *sh*.

Kashmira" who were invited by Ashoka to his council, employing the name of the land for the capital.[12] Linking the various compounds and derivatives from the ancient term, including the Kashmiri *Kashir*, it is the root *Kash*, and not the mountain, hero or city with which it combines which is the philological constant.

On the Sea of Vourukasha,[13] the shining Yima (Jamshid, Yama), the resplendent in beauty, received the command to build the ark and to place within it "the loveliest of beings, the most beautiful and gracious, to preserve them from the mortal winter let loose by the demoniac powers, that they may one day people a world transfigured." The ark was lighted from within by a radiance of glory which required neither sun nor moon nor stars. By the light which has no beginning, the *xvarnah* of glory and victorious destiny, Ahura Mazda created "these many creatures, beautiful and good and marvellous, shining in the radiance of life."

> The Shining Ones who will make a new creation, exempt from age and death, decomposition and corruption, eternally alive, eternally ascending, that the dead may be resurrected and immortality come to the living and the world be renewed to our wish.
>
> Yasht XIX, *Zend Avesta*

[12] *Tsa-a-han-ching*, Chapter 23, quoted in *Yuan Chwang*, Oriental Trans. Fund, New Series, Vol. XIV, Royal Asiatic Society, I. p. 264.

[13] The "centre" is transferred with each and every experience to a different space, to Azarbaijan as a necessity of the Sasanian soul, which sought to bring the holy land within the borders of the later empire, to *Kashmira Mandala* as an experience of the Indian. The language of the Gathas of Zarathustra is not the language of Media in the West, but the Indo-Iranian language of the East. *Hapta Hindu* (*Sapta-Sindhu*), *karshvar* of the seven rivers, *below* Airyanem Vaeja, is well identified with the western Indus system.

"The meaning of the centre, *medium mundi*, as the place in which psychic events ever and each time take place, permits us, as the space of hierophanies, to place the problem on a level where tradition and positive history are no longer opposed."

Terre Celeste, op. cit. Henry Corbin, pp. 118-19.

In the first and second centuries A.D., Greek artists under the patronage of the Buddhist kings of Gandhara, Bactria and Mathura created the first images of the Buddha. From concepts of the Hellenistic Apollo and his dominant drapery the image moved to the Buddhist concept until an exquisite style of Greek carving had come to serve the transcendental vision. The aura of the Saoshyants, the *xvarnah* of the promised saviour conquered the stone. From the halo of the Lord Wisdom of the "Kasha" tradition both the Buddha image in the East and the angelic figures of early Gnostic Christian iconography received their auras. The vision is complete in the celestial Graeco-Bactrian faces of the Buddhas of the Kabul Museum and the dancers among the water symbols of the rose-tinged tiles of the monastery of the Harwan Valley in Kashmir, whose etherial drapery is transfigured to pure music. There, the dramatic contrasts of the Graeco-Bactrian collections are repeated, the serene exaltation of the enlightened ones offset by a series of intensely human character studies and caricatures. In Kabul, the human heads form a collection of statuettes, in Harwan a portrait gallery in tile. The water birds of the Ajanta paintings reappear in Harwan, as though in a review by Kashmir of themes from the whole Buddhist world, its own love of water, music and the purity of Himalayan contour predominant.

For the Iranians, Iran Vej, source of the celestial waters, is lost as a geographical reality. For the Greeks, by the time of Pindar, ordinary, men no longer knew the "wonderful Hyperborean way" back to that spiritual cradle. In India, the concept of a circle at the summits of the world, which are the summits of the soul and scene of its victory and completion, is preserved as a reality both of faith and geography.

The Kashmiris have played their part in the drama with the unconscious grandeur of folk experience, analysing the spiritual events of pilgrimage associated with their own earth and waters both scientifically and in experiences of ecstasy. The tale of the battle of the Gods for Kashmir as told in the

Nilamata, and the festivals it prescribes to shape life by the parable of the human being battling for the immortals against demons who destroy a divine earth and innocent creation survive as themes of a philosopy which claims to be the lost key to the *Vedas*. The story of thought in Kashmir is of its use of this key of its own to discover the meaning of every philosophy it encountered to the original concept of the human being. Its effort was to confirm its own vision by understanding of the far-flung manifestations of the human spirit in its intuitions and gnosis. From the first mythological poet to twentieth-century Zinda Kaul, whose lover from eternity sends the streams and flowers as a personal message, Kashmir has regarded its own beauty as revelation of the true reality, and the object of its philosophy has been to restore the first pure order. Among lakes reflecting the heavens, the image of creation is of reflection. A heaven is reflected upon an earth, an experience upon an experiencing being.

In the philosophical literature which followed the literature of mytho-history, Kashmir gave highly systematic development to the mode of perception which visualised this relationship of the universe and the human being, governed by one law of musical, mathematical beauty. Its particular quality was in a merging of devotional poetry with Pythagorean concepts of ethics and cosmic justice as phases of a law of metamorphosis and creative evolution. Peoples came, particularly by the original routes from Central Asia. There are contacts with Sumer and China, even legends of the lost tribes of Israel. The thought which was Kashmir's flowed on uninterrupted, and the same events of mytho-history are assigned to one era after another, everyone claiming, in turn, to have drained the lake and to have received the sacred book revealed by Nila Naga. Knowing that they were guarded by a Naga, notes Hiuen Tsiang, "the Kashmiris, beautiful and fond of learning, could crow over their neighbours."

Every shrine of Kashmir has its *Mahatmaya*, its book combining a conservative topographical accuracy with puranic

material of interest to spiritual rather than chronological history. Chronology stands in the way of the feeling of unbroken continuity which so strongly characterises Kashmir. Critical history suffers, but spiritual history is clearly outlined. Perhaps the most remarkable chapter in the spiritual history of Kashmir is the Brahmanical chronicle of its Muslim rulers, from their ascension in the fourteenth century to the time of Akbar. Jonaraja, Shrivara, Prajyabhatta and Shuka continued the better known *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana. Their evaluation of the "Musula" kings is on the strict basis of their sincerity in the practice of their own religion. To be sincere in their own religion meant to protect the Hindus in theirs. Never is Islam blamed by the pandit historians for the lapses to iconoclasm or intolerance which Musula kings, under the influence of "drink, outsiders or she-serpents" might undergo. The pandits made a gay sport of defeating the ambassadors of the Persian kings in debates on Persian prosody and in outsinging the Turks in the "difficult meters of Tauranian songs". They received presents of rare birds, jewelled musical instruments and boats with beautiful sails from their Muslim patrons for their victories. They disapproved when the king spent his time giving music lessons, or following the advice of she-serpents in politics, or she-doctors in sickness, or getting drunk and falling from the crystal room on the twelfth floor of the palace. When he patronised letters and science and developed mineral resources to relieve the land tax, the Sanskrit language did not contain adequate praise for the worshipper of Allah. Muslim rulers whom the Brahman historians considered true worshippers of Allah were elevated to the rank of the Hindu gods. "Incarnation of Vishnu", "portion of Mahadeva" were descriptions of Sultan Zeinu'l-abadin, the Muslim whose intelligence and piety met the ultimate Brahmanical ideal.

The literary history which throws light upon the continuity of thought and feeling in Kashmir employs a number of languages. The Gilgit manuscripts, discovered in a Buddhist

stupa in 1931, are a fifth or sixth century Sanskrit literature of Kashmir. Kashmiris who wrote in Persian created a literature no less Kashmir's own. The Persian of Kashmir stands in relation to that of Iran somewhat as American literature to English. Ladakh, closely connected with Kashmir by spiritual ties from the beginning of the Buddhist era, possesses an enchanting literature, folk and religious, which may be regarded as the heritage of Kashmir's "outer mandala", as is the Dogri with its wealth of songs. The Gujars, shepherds of the heights, bequeath an exaltation of melody and verse rare even in the Himalayas, while a full evaluation of the Ladakhi religious Masque, with its dithyrambic choruses and Himalayan imagery would be as a liturgic soul to integrate the scattered monuments of Buddhist art waiting among the irises and deodars to be reassembled by the vision of a Nagarjuna. That vision, in its original form, was restored to Kashmir in the revolt against the later Buddhism which brought about the Shaiva renaissance.

For the Shaiva way of seeing, the urge of cosmogony prompts the individual, no less than the waters, to shape and reshape the world. Sects and cliques must be periodically swept away. The energy of both world and individual is in a meeting of positive and negative forces, vibrating everywhere, blooming in ranges of consciousness, ever, at every moment, stirring in the *first* stirring. Within the atom, according to monistic Shaivism, the two phases of this ever first *spanda* energy collide, the powers of desire and limitation: Kāma, the outpouring urge of unlimited energy, and Kalā, the artist and restrainer. Anu, the atom, is the theatre of their performance, creating the forms which the Lord, in His play and picture-making, casts upon a screen of radiance. The experiencer is himself the theatre, for he is the dimensionless *bindu*, the point in which the powers of the pairs generating the universe focus their eternal meeting.

The Kashmir Shaiva theory is centred in the evidence of psychosomatic exercises conducted in a spirit of experiment

for over five hundred years. In the course of these experiments a system of practical techniques for bringing about the face to face recognition of the unconscious by the conscious mind was developed. It is in this meeting, according to the Kashmir theory, that the human being becomes lord of his circle, his destiny, and that the harmonious action of the pair, *ends and means*, with its spiritual and ethical consequences is established. Without the union of this pair, it is not really a world which is generated by Kāma and Kalā, but a confusion of ethical problems.

The story of the experiments of Advaita (non-dualistic) Shaivism, and of their bearing upon life and living, forms the literary history of Kashmir from the eighth to the fourteenth century, introducing philosopher-poets, writers on the dance and aesthetics, composers of mystery plays dramatising theory and findings of a Tantric psychoanalysis. The system divides its literature into three branches. The first is the *Spanda Shastra*, the body of poems and treatises commentating the verses of the founder of the school, Vasugupta, on the world as energy and aspiration, in reply to Buddhist nihilists. The *Pratyabhijna Shastra*, on the great recognition, develops the philosophical concept of the *spanda* energy in commentaries which preserve the poetic eagerness of the first generation of disciples. In the midst of a logical argument with the nihilists, the prose cries out to ask in verse how much fruit the Supreme Brahma can endure in the outpour of beauty and blooming. Utpalacharya, whose *Ishvara Pratyabhijna* opens this second phase of the Shaiva renaissance, gave his logical arguments an exalted form of devotional verse.

The greatest literary development took place in the *Tantra*, the third branch of the system, its liturgy and mystery play. *Agama*, it had "come down" by tradition, a dialogue in eternity between Shiva and His energy, the Shakti which is a part of Himself as part of the moon the moonbeam, yet in whom He knows Himself by seeing Himself in a mirror. Kashmir rewrote and rearranged what was *Agama* to suit its

changing experience. Shesha Naga, himself, had no objection to seeing his poetry rewritten. He had composed a cosmogony in honour of the renaissance and Kashmir's return to its senses after a period of confusion caused by nihilists and dualists. As the movement developed and personal creativeness grew from Vasugupta's fifty-two verses to Abhinava Gupta's *Tantraloka* of five thousand eight hundred stanzas and the long list of his other works, Abhinava rewrote Shesha's *Adhara Karikas* from the standpoint of the perfectly developed monism.

Vasugupta's disciple, Somananda, claimed that the sacred mystery of the beauty and the blooming had been transmitted by a fifth generation ancestor of his own from fifteen generations of long-lived teachers before Vasugupta. In any case, Kashmir viewed it not as a new discovery, but the return to a point of view of its own under provocation of outside doctrines which had reached the limit of absurdity.

In the beginning, Buddhism had not been an outside doctrine. Kashmiris wrote Buddhist scriptures of their own,[14] and missionaries to Central Asia, Khorasan, China and Japan were based in Kashmir. Statues of Buddha, by order of the *Nilamata Puranam*, had their place beside those of Shiva, and, left to themselves, the Kashmiris practiced a happy folk blending of the cults which made Hieun Tsiang call them "orthodox and heterodox at once". The Laws of Nila Naga required them to sweep and decorate the houses of the Buddhists on Buddhist Festivals, to the accompaniment of dancing and singing, and to paint pictures on the walls of Buddhist temples "according to the instructions of the Buddhists". The Birthday of the Lord Buddha, which Nila Naga had predicted, was to be observed as a "joyous three day festival", in which lamps, incense, flowers, perfumes and dances were to be provided for his statues by the Kashmiris, and presents of fruit and books were to be made to the

[14] *The Gilgit Manuscript Series*, ed. by Nalinaksha Dutt, the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, No. 71.

Buddhists. It was outsiders who forced their own ways on others, and a struggle has taken place, from the beginning, between outside sectarians and the Kashmiris with their natural faith in mysteries of a rhythm and a radiance older and more lasting than the earth.

When Hiuen Tsiang came from China in the seventh century, the King of Kashmir gave him five assistants and twenty scribes to copy the sacred books Kashmiris had written or collected.[15] The Gilgit manuscripts confirm the Chinese tale that it had been the Nagas, the spiritual guardians of Kashmir, who had acclaimed the Buddha, receiving the apostle Majjhantika[16] as a person bringing an acceptable version of their own doctrines to their protectorate. The Buddha himself, returning through the air from the conversion of the Dragon (Naga) Udyana, had remarked to his companion as they passed over the green vales of Kashmir that this paradise, which would be like Indra's pleasure garden, would be the home of the "true great Buddhist congregation".[17]

Five hundred Buddhist saints had arrived by air when, exasperated by King Ashoka's failure to distinguish the *arhat* from the common monk in a quarrel over a heretical treatise, he had taken them to the banks of the Ganges to test them in the ordeal by drowning. The *arhats* made use of their powers to fly away to Kashmir, where they settled in the beautiful vales without being harassed as heretics. Hiuen Tsiang goes on to say that Ashoka, in great distress, followed them to Kashmir to apologise and persuade them to return. Nothing, however, could induce them. So the pious king built five hundred monasteries for them and gave the whole of Kashmir as a present to the Buddhist Church.[18]

Hiuen Tsiang gives a detailed account of how the fourth

[15] *Life of Hieun Tsiang*, by the Shaman Hwui Li, trans. by Samuel Beal, London, 1911.

[16] *Gilgit Mss. Series, op. cit.* Sanskrit text I, pp. 5-6.

[17] Lien-hua-mien-ching, Chap. II, quoted in *Yuan Chwang* Vol. I, p. 264.

[18] *ibid.* p. 267.

great Buddhist Council, under Kanishka,[19] Emperor of the Kushans, came to be held in Kashmir. Kanishka would have preferred to hold it in his own capital, but Gandhara was admittedly too hot and damp. Rajagriha had a quarrelsome atmosphere. And Kashmir was the land in which the records of the council should be preserved. The delegates composed three hundred thousand stanzas of explanatory *shastras*. All learning from remote antiquity was reviewed, and the Buddhist scriptures were again made clear and distinct. King Kanishka then had the finished treatises written on copper plates and closed them in stone boxes, which he deposited in a tope built for the purpose. They were to be guarded in *Kashmira Mandala*, and none were to be removed. Those who wished to consult them could do so within the *Mandala* itself.[20]

Vasugupta's quarrel was not with the Buddhism of which Kashmir had been legitimate guardian. The name of Nagarjuna, initiate of the true mysteries of the Greater Vehicle, was remembered with such romantic affection by the Kashmiris that it served them in the fifteenth century as a term by which to praise their favourite Muslim King for his skill in chemistry and attachment to the doctrine of Nirvana. Between the sixth and eighth centuries a change took place in the Buddhist outlook under the influence of outside propagandists. The development was to have far-reaching consequences, for it not only infuriated the Nagas and alienated them from Buddhism. The monistic reaction which it provoked in Kashmir was felt in Central Asia and Khorasan by the avenues of spiritual communication which had long existed, but which had been well developed in the Kushan era and employed for the missionary activities of the Buddhists.

[19] The Kushans, the most powerful tribe of the Yueh-chih from north-western China, conquered the Kabul Valley and Gandhara about 50 A.D. Kanishka, the "Second Ashoka", as patron of Buddhism and Gandhara art, ascended the throne perhaps 125 or 128 A.D. The southern capital of the Kushans was Mathura.

[20] *Yuan Chwang, op. cit.* I, pp. 270 sq.

Vasugupta's disciples Kallata and Somananda were actively propagating the *spanda* revelation during the reign of King Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.), an age of political renaissance and adventurous expansion for Kashmir. The Kashmiris claimed that nothing but spiritual merit could pass their own mountain walls. They themselves went everywhere. They basked under palm trees on the shore of the southern ocean and, "sincere in the observance of the sacred law, set forth for the conquest of the world to impose prohibition of the slaughter of living beings".[21] Or, a valid cause for a military expedition would be to stop the weaving of cloth of gold with the imprint of royal footprints. One such fabric, woven in the south, had been worn by the Queen of Kashmir, to the distaste of the Kashmiris. Or, there would be a romantic disappearance into the north, with its memories of sacred "Aryanaka". Lalitaditya, the greatest and most inquisitive of kings, left army and kingdom to go that way.

Communication and contacts with the north and west, no less than with Tibet and China, were well maintained, but it was a mode of perception growing from within which brought another movement to meet the Kashmir monistic renaissance on that ancient ground of crossroads, Central Asia. The acceptance of the beauty and the blooming, the universe of energy and aspiration which Kashmir propagated, were an attitude restored to Western Asia during the same years, from within itself. Islam had invested Adam with the mystery of the Word, and the angels had been commanded to bow to him. The world of the Caliphate of the Celestial Adam was not an impure or unreal exile, but material to be shaped in a second creation, our own creative evolution. Islamic Gnosis[22] built its universe upon the Quranic investiture of Adam with the angelic powers, superseding the Adam of the battle of light

[21] *Rajatarangini*, Kalhana Pandit, trans. Aurel Stein, III, 27-30, p. 75.

[22] *Erfan, Ma'rifah*, the Arabic technical equivalent of the Greek Gnosis. The mode of knowledge in which facts are transfigured by illumination. *Arif*, the Gnostic, "he who knows". Fem. *Arifah*, Plural, "*Orafa*".

and darkness as conceived by the Manichaeans of Central Asia, and replacing the fallen Adam of Church-Council Christianity. It likewise eliminated from other systems of Gnosis converging in it such elements of pessimism as may have come to be associated with the status of Adam-Angelos or the spiritual circumstances or implications of his guilt or fall. The elements uncongenial to Erfan were precisely those to which contemporary Kashmir objected in reshaping traditional materials and refuting dualistic cosmogonies. Erfan is, itself, the *Bodhi* illumination in terms of an Islamic piety, and its literature points not to influence from the later Buddhism, but to a movement allied to Kashmir's monistic reaction against it.

Writer by writer and saint by saint, from the Abbasid era onward, the parallels between the poet-philosophers of Erfan and the Kashmir Shaiva writers are intimate. The works of Jabir-ibn-Hayyan, the renowned eighth century alchemist of Baghdad,[23] disciple of the Imam Jafar Sadiq, bear close comparison with the writings of the first two generations of Vasugupta's disciples. At the crown of the two movements, in the early eleventh century, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Abhinava Gupta present a single universe of angelic energies and logically related experiences of consciousness. Their systems may be compared point by point, their technical vocabularies translated and exchanged with ease and accuracy. The historical meeting of the Shaiva philosophy and Erfan in the fourteenth century is the climax, not the beginning of a movement. A six hundred year prelude of affinities over a wide area remains to be explored in the comparison of the Sanskrit and Persian-Arabic sources.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, an adventurer from the borders of Tibet, a convert to Islam, entered the service of the independent Queen of Kashmir and succeeded in marrying her. It was not the first time in Kashmir history

[23] Jabir's scattered and fragmentary works have been made available by the devoted labours of Paul Kraus, *Jabir ibn Hayyan*, Cairo 1942.

that a ruling Queen proved a "political she-serpent" or to have "trampled the flowers of the lotus lake as an infuriated she-elephant". The crude Tibetan, under the title of Sultan Shamsu'd-din, massacred the Kashmiris to convert them. When, later in the century, "hosts of saints", fleeing the political upheavals of Timur's invasions arrived, a totally different Islam appeared and the battle of ideologies which was to preoccupy Kashmir for the next six hundred years began.

The Islam taught by the saints and seers of Iran and Central Asia had nothing in common with the coercion of the scheming conqueror of the Queen. Quranic authority was on the side of the "Orafa". The Quran not only prohibits compulsion in religion, but violence or the use of force for any purpose but self-defence, even there, as the resort of those unable to rise to the heights in which good is returned for evil. The masters of the "upward way" found ready followers in Kashmir. To indulge weakness, they taught, by invoking the historical precedent of some other person's weakness was not to practice Islam. To honour the wayfarer and orphan, to struggle for self-mastery, not even to argue of religion unless the discussion be conducted in the gentlest manner, to make no difference between peoples or prophets was the law of Muhammed. And so it happened that the name of Muhammed came to Kashmir as an invocation of what it itself held dear, a love of life intense enough to regard all life as one, and a faith in salvation through knowledge.

The meeting with the Shaiva seers of those who lived Islam in this way was personalised, in the Kashmiri way, in legends of the friendship of a Grand Master of the Gnostic Kubrawiyya Order with the poetess whose title in Kashmir today is, at once, Yogeshvari, Mistress of Yoga, and Arifah, the Gnostic, Lalla. Through him, Mir Sayyed Ali Hamadani,[24] "Shah

[24] A full bibliography of Mir Sayyed Ali's writings is given by Ali Asgar Hikmat in his monograph: *Les Voyages d'un Mystique Persan de Hamadan au Cashmere*, Gunther, Paris. Extract from *Journal Asiatique*.

Hamadan", Kashmir established contact with a line of spiritual succession which fought political theocracy throughout Islam: Najmu'd-din Al Kobra, Ala'ud-dolah Semnani, Muhammed Nur Baksh. Annual ceremonies and experiences of group ecstasy commemorate Shah Hamadan's mission in Kashmir today, and the *Khangah* in which he taught is a beloved shrine. Through him, who earned his living sewing caps and who warned kings that to become Muslims they must practice manual labour in the footsteps of the prophet and pious caliphs, Kashmir laid foundations for the Hindu-Muslim *sadhana* at the heart of all its subsequent renaissances in thought and poetry.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the Kashmiri personality of an indigenous order of "Orafa" had been established. The *Tantra*, with its emotional wealth of liturgy and poetry, had overflowed in folk song. Kashmiri, rich in Shaiva terminology and the creative adaptability of a child of Sanskrit, was a medium ready to receive the Persian, as the Tantric Liturgy of Bliss to receive the call of the Sufi to the quest of the Promised Beloved. The consecration of Kashmiri poetry to the quest of the Beloved, in the century of Lalla, is the overflow of the two streams in a rhapsody of mutual discovery. Love poetry was ever to be the quest of the One who dazzles, Savitar, Maitreya, Imam. With Lalla, it is the Spirit Shiva, with Madalasa, the great Yogini before her, the Elexir. Rupa Bhavani sought the universe through love, Habba Khatun, the Queen dethroned, lost love in order to find it. Arnimal, at the opening of yet another great poetic era, the nineteenth century, turned nostalgy for the lover who had deserted her to the Beloved from whose caress bloom the apple blossoms of Kashmir. That a woman should have inaugurated every poetic era is the Song of Songs of the *Tantra* living on in Kashmir, the worship of God through man, of Brahma through a blade of grass. Man cannot sing of man as woman sings of the God she seeks through the man she loves.

Gentleness and the Way of Love were the faith which shaped

the "Order of Rishis" established by Lalla's "milk child" Nuru'd-din. The Muslim saints of Kashmir, Davud Mishqati explains, "followed the religious practices of Brahmans and Buddhists".[25] Nuru'd-din, the "Preceptor of all Rishis", added to such extreme practices as living on dry leaves to avoid taking life a Kashmiri sense of humour and the characteristic energy of the village. His Rishis taught crafts, grew fruit as a public service, lent a hand with the harvest and all forms of manual labour. Songs of the saints and work songs went together. The saints are still invoked in Kashmir in rhythmic invocations as aids to labour, commemorating their participation in the fellowship of labour and the importance they attached to it as foundation of a harmonious society. Boats are moved and loads are lifted in their names, pet names, for the test of a saint was to acquire such as name as "Rishi Mol", "Rishi Father", to be "king" for all Kashmiris and to have meatless weeks observed in his memory by Hindus and Muslims together in the city of his tomb.

One of the kings upon whom the Kashmiris call in their labour was king not only in the spiritual, but also the political sense, Sultan Zeinu'l-abadin, who presided over the political secularism which emerged with effortless joy in the second century of Kashmir's acceptance of Islam. The Brahman historians and rhapsodists of the fifteenth century surpassed the Saladdin romances of the troubadours in their election of Zeinu'l-abadin, "Badshah", the *beau-ideal* of the villager, as Prince of Chivalry. To them we owe the description of the tanks of cream and wine with which he fed "all the people", of his restoration of the books of the Brahmans and their temples, his passion for science, social reform and the doctrine of Nirvana.

> "Where now can be found one like King Jaina in greatness of intellect or in the art of invention, in fondness for song and music, in capacity for rhetorical discussion, in writing

[25] *Asraru'l Abrar*, Ms. Kashmir State Research Department.

books, in listening to holy shastras, or in composing new works?

There was not a branch of learning, or craft, or literature or fine arts which did not become celebrated in the world during the reign of King Shri Jaina.

Even cooks, porters and women composed literary works in his day. Their books still fill all the houses."[26]

Representing the opposing, "outside" theocratic point of view, an invader of the following century, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, wrote that Zeinu'l-abadin, "in order to humour all the nations in the world cared neither for religion nor irreligion."[27]

For the Kashmiris, "Badshah" embodied in himself the ideal Islam. The authority with which the Kashmiri folk song blends the Persian and Indian literary and musical motifs cultivated in his court shows the extent to which the people themselves participated in his restoration of the characteristically Kashmiri sense of values and ideals. The *Shahnamah* of Ferdowsi, which served Pandit Bhattavatara as a model for his *Jainavilasa*, had restored Iran to its sacral origins, building from the ancient foundations of the ideal nation to the Islamic era and its new humanism. Bhattavatara studied the *Shahnamah*, "vast as the sea", to understand the role of King Jaina in bringing to Islam Kashmir's profound and beautiful heritage. The crystal tombstone which the Kashmiris placed upon his tomb represented what he had been to them. They had seen themselves in him. No smoke rose from the houses on the day of his death. No household cooked. He had been the mirror of their hopes, and evil times and struggles awaited Kashmir without him.

[26] *Jainatarangini*, Shrivara, *op. cit.* III, p. 135.
[27] *Tarikhi Rashidi*, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, E. Denison Ross, London, 1895, p. 434.

Shrivara's history covers three generations. He had known the great men of the realm from the beginning of their careers. How necessary had been the crystal, to keep them true to themselves and to the ideals of Kashmir, his Greek Chorus of commentary shows. Allama Ahmad,[28] poet laureate and senior minister, for all his proved ability in administration, fell a prey to intriguers in the end. The "outside" Sayyeds, whom Zeinu'l-abadin's loyal protegé, Tajibhatta, had managed to remove from Kashmir, were recalled by Ahmad at the instigation of Tajibhatta's rivals. The arrogant Sayyeds, who killed the birds and treated the Kashmiris disrespectfully, and whose she-serpents at court undermined the royal intelligence, returned to destroy not only Tajibhatta, but all that King Jaina had accomplished in fifty years.

An epic struggle followed. The villagers pooled their rice, armed themselves with farm weapons and formed a national army. Hindus from Jammu joined the Muslims of the valley to oust the Sayyeds. Throughout the story, which Shrivara tells as a breath-taking drama, the principles of Kashmira are placed in the mouths of the loyal advisors the drunken young king will not hear.

From this point on, outside Musalman fanatics are the villains of Kashmir history. In the invasions which followed, folk proverb promised that whenever things would be bad enough, there would be another Tazi Bhat. Invaders who arrived under pretext of restoring orthodoxy were mellowed or expelled. The arch-inquisitor of this category was Mirza Haidar Dughlat of Kashgar, who came once to raid and loot, and a second time to occupy Kashmir in the name of the Emperor Humayun. In his own memoirs he tells of how the infidels bought their lives with their possessions,[29] and of his services to orthodoxy in his inquisition of the Kashmir heretics, "like whom there are none in the world". The followers of

[28] The Malika Allama Ahmad wrote a biography of Nuru'd-din.
[29] *Tarikhi Rashidi*, *op. cit.*

Shah Hamadan's grand-disciple, Nur Baksh, were the particular object of his inquisition. He described them as "heretics and atheists who lead men astray, who do not know what is lawful or unlawful, who consider vigils and abstinence in food acts of piety and purity, observe forty day retirements, walk proudly in the way of interior holiness omitting the observance of religious forms and ceremonies, and maintaining that the former is independent of the latter".

Mirza Haidar paid for his inquisition with his life. An uprising on the lines of Tajibhatta's destroyed his garrisons and enabled the mob to kill him in a street fight. A unique eye-witness account is preserved in the manuscript of a certain Sayyed Ahmad,[30] who to save a corpse from desecration took Mirza Haidar's body from the mob and gave it a decent burial.

It was in the period following Mirza Haidar's reign as arbiter of orthodoxy that Kashmir took up the question of defining orthodoxy for itself. To do so, it turned to the oldest of the classical legal sources of Islam and to the liberal authorities of the day in Mecca. The principles at stake in the struggle between the Kashmiris and the Musalman invaders were closely analogous to those of the Reformation in contemporary Europe and passions ran as high. Those who claimed that inner holiness does not depend upon forms and ceremonies undermined the claim of the State to spiritual as well as temporal authority, and were therefore, according to Mirza Haidar and his school, heretics deserving of death. To the sixteenth century intellectuals of Kashmir, represented by philosopher-poets whose works and biographies survive, the tenet that the individual is his own supreme authority and must think for himself *into* Islamic typifications appeared the grandeur of Islam. That personal conduct is the only criterion of orthodoxy was a tenet which disqualified Mirza Haidar Dughlat's claim to it, or the claims of other violent raiders and looters to being Muslims at all.

[30] Mss. Kashmir State Research Department.

A leading philosopher-poet of the "Reformation" was Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, whose disciple, Habibullah, has left a biography of him in verse, and whose own *diwan*, romances and Quranic commentary survive.[31] Sarfi visited the Central Asian and Iranian centres of the Gnostic Orders, associated with Kashmir since Shah Hamadan and studied law in Mecca, with a view to formulating the relationship between rational and ecstatic experience. The Quranic image of the worlds is of interlocking storeys, *tabaqan*, and Kashmiri commonsense could see that rather than argue over whether angels' wings have feathers lawyers should practice law and ecstatics talk to the angels. Habibullah's *diwan* is more lyrical than Sarfi's, as Habib is afforded the luxury of assuming the premises proved, and free to sing of the liberation of gardens and gardens of roses from armies and armies of crows. To him, as to Zeinu'l-abadin, the Hindu pilgrim, walking thousands of miles to Kashmir, confirmed Kashmir's identity as holy land and halo of the world.

Rupa Bhavani, the Shaiva poetess, from whose work selections will be included in Vol. II of *The Way of the Swan*, represented the ecstasy of the era. According to tradition, she carried on a dialogue in verse with Shah Qalandar, an important Muslim poet of the day, and was revered as inspired by the Goddess of love and gentleness, whose spirit preserves Kashmir from the violence and inner conflicts which motivate invaders.

Sarfi in his person represented the ideal balance of ecstasy and orthodoxy. A review of the law for its own sake, pure law, shows that the creative canonist, no less than the Arif, thought into Islam through experience, discarding the outworn and adapting eternal principles to the new. The nine hundred year panorama of Islamic law behind Sarfi showed no less creative a process of evolution than Abbasid science at its prime. It had been, by its very function, secular from the beginning. Its organic nature, as a process and not a monu-

[31] Kashmir State Research Department collection.

ment of precedents, was as much in need of freedom from state control as the individual in his spiritual experience. In the theocratic state of Mirza Haidar Dughlat's concept, the judiciary was an instrument for the enforcement of conformity. In the concept of Abu Hanifa of the Golden Age, whom Mirza Haidar pretended to represent without understanding, the creative canonist turns the law to the service of progress. The difference between him and the conformist is that the latter tries to reproduce historical precedents, while the canonist who helps the law to evolve deduces principles from precedents and reapplies them to new circumstances, which may be in direct contradiction to the old.

The titles of affection bestowed upon Sarfi acknowledged him as the spirit of Abu Hanifa in his century, and, at once, the spirit of Erfan. He was invested with the "cloaks" of a number of orders associated with the Kubrawiyya, the Chistiyya and Naqshbandi. Every resurgence of Kubrawiyya contacts has meant a renaissance for Kashmir in thought and poetry, down to the eighteenth century *Futuhatu'l Kubrawiyya* of Abdu'l Wahab Nuri,[32] a magnificent work reviewing the history of Kashmir's contacts with the spiritual currents which ran counter to theocracy throughout the centuries. When Sarfi returned from his legal studies in Mecca and his travels in Iran and Central Asia, he organised a delegation of Kashmiri writers and intellectuals to wait upon Akbar in Delhi and ask for help in merging Kashmir in the India of his dream. It meant dethroning the Chak dynasty of patriotic Kashmir Sultans, specifically, the husband of the poetess Habba Khatun. The principles of the Reformation outweighed considerations represented by Yusuf Chak.

Akbar's chronicler, Abu'l-Fazl, gives more space in his account of Kashmir to sacred waters and miraculous springs, to tulips growing on housetops and the flowers of mountain meadows than to the support given Akbar by the Kashmir

[32] Mss. Kashmir State Research Department.

intellectuals, a highly revealing phase of the *sadhana* introduced by Lalla and Shah Hamadan. The movement headed by Sarfi and his connections with Akbar's preceptor, Sheikh Selim Chisti, along with the currents which met it from the "Illuminative" renaissance of the *Ishraqiyun* of Safavid Isfahan are an important chapter in the spiritual history of the century. Had the example of Kashmir been followed, a secular India might have come into being then and there.

The methods of Akbar in his campaign for a united India involved an attempt to supplant orthodox confessions by a fusion of doctrines. They prepared the ground for Aurungzeb's role of champion and restorer of orthodoxy. The Rishis of Kashmir with their commonsense, "every one of them a pearl in the ocean of love and union",[33] preferred a union of lives. Orthodox confessions were not to be abandoned, but preserved in their integrity. The grace of Zeinu'l-abadin was all that was required. The divine religion, Din-e-Ilahi, was not to be viewed as a doctrine compounded from here and there. It was, rather, the human love at the heart of every religion. The Kashmiri village Brahman, when he took the thread, was invested with tradition. He accepted a certain discipline in his habits. In his innocent years, before assuming the thread and his responsibilities, he made himself one with his Muslim "milk relatives" by sharing the food of their table. The village Rishis, in their practical way, believed that normal relationships begin in childhood and psychological difficulties can be bridged in the formative years.

Kashmir went to the root of various problems arising from the psychological mistakes of orthodoxy. Devotional Shaivism had proclaimed caste the first bar to the Mysteries, and, whatever happened to the other castes, only Brahmans remained in Kashmir. Under the supervision of village Rishis, Brahmans and Muslims happily practised the Chinese form of agriculture which requires performance of sanitary functions reserved by caste

[33] *Rishi-Namah* of Bahahu'd-din Matu Kashmiri, Mss. Kashmir State Research Department.

Hindus of the later era for untouchables. It was a source of astonishment to the learned of India to come all the way to Kashmir in order to visit a famous Sanskrit grammarian or logician and find him ploughing his field or fertilising it in person.

The final test of Kashmir's ability to withstand disruption from without was in the Afghan and Sikh invasions of the nineteenth century. The Afghans began with a *jehad* against the leading Brahman families. They ended striking coins in the name of Nuru'd-din and writing poetry. The Sikhs avenged the *jehad* of the Afghans while the Kashmiris borrowed passages from the Islamic poets to illustrate their version of the divine dance of the Lord Krishna and the Gopis. Aflame with love, the wild rose sought Him in the forest, while the flowers of the Kashmir spring heralded the victory of Rama over the demoniac creation. In an extraordinary Kashmiri *Ramayana* of this period, Ravana, the King of the Demons is depicted as Sita's father, and an Oedipus tangle at the root of the struggle with darkness.

It was at this time that the pandits composed a new Shaiva literature in Persian verse. The classical Persian *gazal* became the ode to Shiva, Lord of the La Makan, Spaceless Space. The technical vocabulary of Erfan suited their purposes perfectly, and morning prayers were conducted in a Persian which listening neighbours could not distinguish from songs of the "Orafa". Whatever position they won for themselves in India when forced out of Kashmir by Persian-speaking invaders, the pandit emigrés continued to compose their Persian Shaiva odes. The second volume of *The Way of the Swan* will include an anthology of these odes. Two volumes of Brahman poetry of high quality as Persian and Urdu verse are published in an anthology, *Bahar-e-Golshan-e-Kashmir*, and there are independent *diwans* in a fresher language than much of the Persian poetry of the period, which had come to cater rather exclusively to royal courts from Kashmir to Constantinople. The pandits were enthusiastic to have cultivated so excellent a medium for a neo-Shaiva literature, and

their enthusiasm restored to Persian poetry some of the glow it had lost in the imitative era of the poets laureate.

Kashmir had met invasion by poetry more than once. When a new kind of invasion created a new set of problems, poetry still held. The economic policy of keeping India a producer of raw materials for industries overseas invested the feudal landed class with a new importance and undermined the village as a self-contained unit and seat of culture. Feudalism was not left to follow its normal course of disintegration as in Europe, where the wars of the Reformation had been formally fought and religion could not be confused with the issue. Artificially supported, the feudal landlord assumed to himself the role of defender of orthodoxy and aided his foreign supporters, in various parts of India, in playing one form of orthodoxy against another.

The Kashmir *sadhana* had entered a Golden Age of poetic renaissance in the nineteenth century. Jia Lal Kaul in his critical essays attributes the new element of joyous abandon in Kashmiri poetry to the inspiration it received from the *Krishna Lila*. The *Upanishads* in the beautiful Persian translation of Dara Shiko, from which Schopenhauer in the Latin version derived the "solace of his life", had become household reading. The *Mahabharata* in Persian, and a whole literature of Kashmiri adaptations from the Persian classics represented the completed *sadhana*, the mature poise of a Kashmir culture woven from the Shaiva and Islamic backgrounds. The two streams had been in a sacred dialogue from the fourteenth century, the allegro of the Kashmir Sonata opening in the songs of Nuru'd-din, the rondo rising to the nineteenth century's merging of Jalalu'd-din Rumi and the *Krishna Lila*. Feudalism failed to undermine the majestic Sonata. The craftsman and artisan fell to the status of indentured labour, but in one place it was Hindus who were the landlords, in another, Muslims exploited Muslims. "Milk relatives" suffered together.

European travellers at the beginning of the twentieth century report the conditions under which Kashmir's beautiful

textiles and embroideries had come to be produced. The pathos of the situation became the theme of twentieth century literature. Poets mourning the fall of the village prepared the movement of New Kashmir, and when propaganda from British India attempted to introduce the confusion with religious issues which had been successful elsewhere, poetry came to the rescue. Mahjur sang the meaning of Kashmir's beauty to freedom of the spirit and the obligation it imposed to save the long-suffering villager from further exploitation. Zinda Kaul accused the books and priests of polluting the stream of religion, a pure stream, born on the heights, of many snow-born streams. In this latest of Kashmir literature there reappears, in terms of a twentieth century humanism, the original ideal of *Kashmira Mandala* where the Gods all built their summer *ashrams* to teach the cults of the plains to live harmoniously together. It no more occurs to the sophisticated Jia Lal Kaul, in his sensitive English rendering of Ghalib[84] that he is a Brahman translating a Muslim than to the Kashmiri village Brahman that the *Mahabharata* can be read in any language but Urdu, or that there is anything strange in his habit of reading Sanskrit prayers in the Persian script.

Kalhana's statement at the beginning of the *Rajatarangini* that the mountains of Kashmir raised their arms to give refuge to the Nagas commemorates a spiritual, if not a critically historical event, the consecration of Kashmir as sanctuary of what the race first held dear. The Indo-Iranian myth of the genesis of the mountains is that the earth, in a tremble of horror, raised them as a protective rampart against the demoniac invasion, investing them with sacral glory and the radiance of theophany that the dawns might illumine their summits and the immortals speak in their forests. The sacred lake in which the prophetic glory awaits the promised saviour, the maiden, shining and immaculate, who guards the source of the waters of life were remembered in Kashmir as the hidden lake of the

[84] *Interpretations of Ghalib* by Jia Lal Kaul, Delhi, 1957, Atma Ram & Sons.

Guardian of Eternity and the source of the transfiguring Vitasta. The *Bodhi* religion of the Nagas had been the wisdom religion of humanity.

Kashmir, as sanctuary of the concept, endured many sacrifices for the unity its Rishis taught. In the transformation of Vedic Rishi to Islamic Rishi, complete with power over the waters and the integrity which makes the word create, the birth of the world from the waters retains its original meaning. Sanctuary of the waters, meeting place of religions, harmoniser of philosophies and tribes, *Kashmira Mandala* is emblem of re-union, both of the race in its branches and with the *self* which appears to each individual on the Mountain of Dawns.

"I am He", the Way of the Swan (page 45) sounds not only from the poems which strive to explain the way of the great union in terms of the Shaiva philosophy or Erfan. The folk music of Kashmir is union with Kashmir itself, a music which comes directly from waters and the open air, from the movements of the Himalayas, in rhythms of pure contour rising to snow-lit peaks or the changing outlines of forests drowned in light. It is the music of those who cross the heights with no instruments but their voices, while city musicians labour with techniques below. The *lol*, the moment of exquisite nostalgy unencumbered by rules of prosody, sounds on the lakes and waterways where Kashmiris in the moonlight wander for the pleasure of wandering. The *mersiyya* for Imam Hosein is heard among the iris flowers in the mountain graveyards not as a dirge or lamentation, but as a celestial lullaby to every soul's best loved. Violets in the snow, daffodils and hyacinths, rose trees which throw their branches over the streams, balsam which follows the cascades to higher meadows are the flower song of the seasons which the Kashmiri hears and repeats in melodies ever recurring, as the pilgrims return with the year. The *lol*, the dirge, the marriage song, the work song and invocation are Kashmir's Way of the Swan, the cry, "I am Kashmir!" for a people entrusted with an eternal ideal.

Whatever came of poetry entered the Kashmir ecstasy,

The reed flute of Jalalu'd-din Rumi retells its story of separation from the reed-bed in the language of the Sindh Valley waters. The "no Hindu-Muslim" lyrics sung in the gatherings in which Kashmiris still induce group ecstasy through music relive the confessions of the *Diwan-e-Shams-e-Tabriz*, of Ibnu'l Farid of Egypt, Nizami Ganjavi, Ismet of Bokhara, Muhiyu'd-din ibn Arabi of Andalusia, Hafez of Shiraz and the many others who exalted the Magian Temple and Christian Monastery, shrines of their favourite infidels, to shrines of the Universal. Kashmiri versions of the Magian Temple and Christian Monastery passages of the Persian and Arab poets are rapturously enjoyed in the gatherings of today and are on the lips of every minstrel. Not in imitating Persian and Arabic poetry, but in reliving it, Kashmir made Erfan its own, until in the nineteenth century it bloomed in the open blossom of village culture. Paramananda, seer of the century, had no formal education beyond what the Persian classics and oral lore of India gave the usual Brahman household. Persian, not Sanskrit, was the literary language the average Kashmiri Brahman could best read.

Paramananda was village accountant at the foot of the mountain range which ascends to Amarnath, goal of the pilgrims who came walking from the far corners of India. In the language of the earth and labour around him, village Kashmiri, he quoted Jalalu'd-din Rumi to tell what the *Krishna Lila* means to the monistic vision of Kashmir and the Body of Vishnu with its seven divine lotuses to the wandering pilgrim. It was an experience ever renewed, relived by every pilgrim, that India is one, as the Spirit is one. It had been the Song of Songs of the *Tantra*. The Maylaya breeze and sugarcane, the banyan tree and peacock, flowers and poems not of Kashmir, modes of music, motifs of temple sculpture had been drawn to the monistic vision of its *Tantra*. The Bengal and Kerala branches of the *Agama* literature met in Kashmir as Chorus of the divine love-play which it was its particular privilege, as goal of the pilgrim, to embody. In the morning

dance, the *tandava* of the Lord brings forth the Himalaya from the ocean. In the evening, the lonely Dancer of Chidambaram, transcending while pervading the souls which love Him, dances alone. At noon, on the three peaks of Kashmir, He dances the *tandava* of the zenith, the simultaneity of eternity and metamorphosis, in which the world is born from the waters and the boat of the Goddess of Kashmir, holding the seeds of future things, emerges from the waters of peace and bliss. From Abhinava Gupta, who wrote of the Dance in technical Sanskrit to Paramananda, who made Kashmiri reveal the secrets of the *Amarnath Yatra*, the North and South of India celebrate the Way of the Swan in the circle of the Himalaya and the Nilgiri. Kashmir's role was to enrich it further with the rapture of Erfan.

Shah Hamadan had brought a poem which served as commentary to Lalla's *Way of the Swan*, Ibnu'l Farid's ode to the wine we drank before creation of the vine.[35] Erfan had its own return of the world to the waters, its souls reborn in the Ocean of Sound. To hear the voice of the "Thou" or "He" who is Al Baqa, the Lasting, the dervish in the *sama'*, the "Hearing", counterpart of the Shiva *tandava* which Lalla danced in ecstatic abandon, passes away from the "I:" *Al Baqa ba'd Al Fana*. The object of *sama'* and *tandava*, closely related forms of the ecstatic dance, was union with the "Thou" which drinks the pre-eternal wine.

When the Sheikh Sana of the Kashmiri Muslim poet, Wahab Khar (p. 71) tells his beads to the name of Rama, and the Christian girl of Attar's tale reappears as an Indian girl, when the Hindu poet Zinda Kaul invokes "that moth, Mansur" and the stone in Mecca's ancient wall, six hundred years of songs and singers explain Kashmir's Way of the Swan.

[35] *Risalat Mashareb Il Adwaq*, Sayyed Ali Hamadani's unpublished commentary on *Qasidah Mimiyya* of Ibnu'l Farid of Egypt, Malek Library, Teheran, Mir Sayyed Ali collection No. 1.